

October 15, 2010

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Resources for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

This letter provides school districts and charter schools with important information about the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), the new state assessment program that will replace the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in spring 2012. For grades 3–8, the STAAR program will assess the same subjects and grades that are currently assessed on TAKS. At high school, however, grade-specific assessments will be replaced with a series of 12 end-of-course assessments: Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, English I, English II, English III, biology, chemistry, physics, world geography, world history, and U.S. history. Attachment A provides an overview of the STAAR program.

The Texas Education Agency with the assistance of Texas educators has developed a number of resources related to the STAAR program. These resources, which are available on a new STAAR webpage at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/>, include the following:

- **Assessment attributes.** This chart compares TAKS and STAAR based on the primary features of the state assessment program and provides a quick overview of the major differences between the two programs.
- **Assessed curriculum.** The assessed curriculum documents show the reporting categories (referred to as objectives on TAKS) for each assessment as well as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) that are eligible to be assessed. The eligible TEKS student expectations grouped under each reporting category are divided into those that are considered essential for academic readiness and those that are considered supporting. See Attachment A for details about the specific distinctions between readiness standards and supporting standards.
- **Test blueprints for the grades/subjects and courses assessed.** The test blueprints show the reporting categories, the number of questions and TEKS student expectations assessed in each reporting category, and the number of questions on the test overall. All blueprints are final with the exception of U.S. history, world history, and world geography. The preliminary blueprints included for the assessments for these courses will be reviewed by Texas educators in early 2011 prior to finalization.

In December 2010, a plan required by the Texas legislature will be posted to the Texas Education Agency's website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/>. This plan detailing the transition from TAKS to STAAR will include specific information about topics such as the STAAR test designs, the assessment requirements for graduation, the measurement of college readiness, standard setting, and plans for meeting the assessment needs of English language learners and students receiving

special education services. Additional STAAR resources will be provided throughout this next year, including explanatory material similar to that found in the current TAKS Information Booklets. These resources will be made available on the STAAR webpage as they are finalized.

If you have questions or need further clarification about this information, please contact the Student Assessment Division.

Assessment Contact Information

Texas Education Agency

Department of Assessment, Accountability, and Data Quality, Criss Cloudt, Associate Commissioner

Division of Student Assessment, Gloria Zyskowski, Deputy Associate Commissioner

(512) 463-9536

studenta@tea.state.tx.us

Attachment A: The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)—A New Assessment Model

Attachment B: A Comparison of Assessment Attributes/Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)